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## 'Callis Contractors' Wins Tollbooth Bid

"If you believe you're not going to make it, then you're not going to make it. I just refuse to quit." Those are the words of Jesse Callis, founder and president of Callis Contractors Inc.

Like many DBEs, Callis identified access to capital as the greatest challenge in business. He said, "Banks look for reasons the deal won't work instead of reasons that it will." Despite tough economic times, the 16-year-old, Durham, North Carolina-based general contracting firm has survived due to a combination of intuition, skill, intelligence and luck, according to Callis. [See CALLIS p. 3]



*Pictured above is one of the completed tollbooths, built by Callis Contractors, for the North Carolina Turnpike Triangle Expressway project—the state's first electronic toll road.*

## NCDOT Offers Work Zone Supervisor Training for DBEs, June 28-29, 2011

NCDOT will offer a two-day course for Work Zone Supervisor Training in Raleigh, NC, June 28-29, 2011, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. Participants will be provided all course materials and will participate in Work Zone Design sessions, resulting in issuance of the certification upon satisfactory completion of a written exam. As of July 1, 2011, Work Zone Supervisor training is an NCDOT requirement.

Interested participants should submit an application to become a qualified Work Zone Supervisor prior to registering for the course. Work Zone Supervisor training is for certified DBEs and SBEs only. The cost is \$50 per person, and only 10 seats are available. For more information, call (919) 508-1808 or fax completed applications to (919) 508-1814.

## "The Apprentice"

I like television as much as the next guy, and I understand the difference between business and show business. But as a student of business who is engaged in helping others succeed in business, watching "The Apprentice" reminds me of growing up with my father who would yell, "turn that mess off!" when my brother and I would huddle in front of the television to watch the latest episode of "Good Times" in 1975. I have now lived long enough to understand why my father hated "Good Times" - and discouraged us from watching it. And I can explain why I don't like "The Apprentice." Learning business from someone who has run four businesses into bankruptcy is like learning "good times" from an impoverished family in a Chicago housing project. Pardon me, but Mr. Trump, "You're fired!" I'd rather be the apprentice of genuine, successful business giants like Sam Walton, Oprah Winfrey, or H.J. Russell.



**Mr. Shelton Russell**  
BOWD Director



## NCIMED Creates Statewide Network of Plan Rooms

BOWD recently signed an agreement with the North Carolina Institute of Minority Economic Development (NCIMED) to support the creation of a statewide network of Plan and Resource Centers (PRCs) for small, women, and minority-owned construction firms in North Carolina. The PRCs provide details and specifications for contractors on various components of a construction, renovation or expansion project, and serve as a resource center for individuals and organizations in the construction trade to access public and private job opportunities, training, scheduling and professional technical assistance. The PRCs will not only provide access to project details, but also offer technical assistance, customized training, and hands-on software training for estimating and submitting competitive bids.

Establishment of the NCIMED Plan and Resource Centers of North Carolina will help facilitate the process of matching major contractors with qualified DBEs, and helping MBEs identify quality business opportunities. In addition to physical plan rooms across the state, including Durham and Greensboro facilities (and future sites in Raleigh, Fayetteville and Winston-Salem), plan room clients will have access to an online plan room to view and print plans and keep abreast of new projects and bids that are posted daily.

BOWD Director Shelton Russell said, "The NCIMED Plan Rooms offer a significant opportunity for DBEs to have access to construction opportunity information free of charge. Multiple locations across the state will provide convenience and the current technology needed to produce timely and accurate responses to construction bids and request for quotations. BOWD is excited to support

NCIMED's Plan Rooms across the state and expects these services to have a positive impact on the success of DBEs in North Carolina."

The NCIMED and BOWD collaboration grew out of a shared goal to help build capacity among DBEs. For years, the organizations have strategically partnered on various projects to ensure equitable participation, access and opportunities for business development among minority firms. North Carolina businesses will not only benefit from



***A collaboration between BOWD and the N.C. Institute of Minority Economic Development will launch a statewide network of Plan Rooms.***

the Plan Room resources but also take advantage of the full slate of services provided by the Institute; including managerial technical assistance and financial, bonding, estimating, and marketing consulting and training.

Kaye Gantt, Director of Special Projects, Finance and Marketing for NCIMED, said, "We're eliminating barriers and ensuring access and opportunity in North Carolina."

Technology and finances have been identified as major obstacles or

barriers preventing MBEs from fully participating in the competitive bidding process because plan room specifications can cost upwards of \$300 per project. The network of PRCs is open to the public, and the resources and training modules are available at no cost. Gantt said the collaboration with BOWD enhances business opportunities for smaller firms that are often overlooked and helps identify potential jobs. "We literally track public and private jobs throughout the state. NCDOT is a large-market player and they have a presence in different regions and project areas."

For more information on the NCIMED Plan and Resource Centers of North Carolina, contact Richard Brown at (919) 287-3036 or [rbrown@ncimed.com](mailto:rbrown@ncimed.com).



## Callis Contractors Inc. Finds Success on New N.C. Toll Roads

*[cont'd from p. 1]*

He said that finding success in the construction industry is mental first, then physical ability to get the job done. "You have to develop that large project mentality to be competitive." The CCI business model incorporates building and strengthening the entire team's skill base, making the sale, and growing the business from the bottom-up.

CCI specializes in high-end commercial construction jobs, and pharmaceutical-related building projects. The firm has been licensed as an NCDOT general contractor for three years. As a result, Callis Contractors won the bid to build the coinless, electronic tollbooth structures on the new N.C. Turnpike Triangle Expressway project – North Carolina's first electronic toll road. CCI was responsible for building the structures, bringing in back-up power, and preparing the booths for electronics that tally and collect toll amounts and monitor traffic.

Callis said that working with BOWD to pursue NCDOT

opportunities has been a positive

experience. The company's goal is to be a valued member of the

team and to bring true value to

all their projects. "We hope to further pursue those kinds of opportunities," he said. In order to continue growing the company, Callis said his challenge has been to find the right niche where CCI can bring value to the project and to the client. He said the downturn in the economy required the company to be flexible and adaptable, reflecting the fact that 18 months ago, 100 percent of CCI's projects were commercial, and now 100 percent of their contracts are federal or state government. "We have a great future ahead of us." He said the key to CCI's success will be identifying new opportunities that allow the company to do a good job ahead of schedule. "Our goal is to work ourselves out of a job as quick as we can" – and then repeat the process again.



## BOWD Invites DBEs to "Like" Us on Facebook

Followers, fans and friends of NCDOT's Business Opportunity and Workforce Development unit can connect with us online through the division's newly upgraded website and Facebook feed, featured on the [www.NCBOWD.com](http://www.NCBOWD.com) homepage. The BOWD website offers information about upcoming training courses and specialty programming such as Executive Management Training and Project Legacy for certified DBEs. The website also lists NCDOT scheduled events and useful links to other business resource sites, along with a digital edition of the monthly

"Success Stories" newsletter. The

Facebook feed is updated frequently

and contains instructional programming information and registration details for NCDOT conferences, workshops and seminars. The Facebook posts also will alert DBEs about upcoming construction projects and bidding opportunities. BOWD encourages North Carolina businesses to "like" us online and get firsthand access to new business development opportunities. To connect with BOWD online, log on to [www.NCBOWD.com](http://www.NCBOWD.com).







# Success Stories

*Creating Successful Opportunities in Business*



## Business Opportunity and Workforce Development Contact Information

Main Number: (919) 508-1808 or (800) 522-0453 toll free • Fax Number: (919) 508-1814

Online: [www.ncdot.org/business/ocr](http://www.ncdot.org/business/ocr) • [www.ncbowd.com](http://www.ncbowd.com) • [bowd\\_info@ncdot.gov](mailto:bowd_info@ncdot.gov)

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